



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 10**

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OFFICE OF  
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

October 3, 2012

Megan Callahan Grant  
NOAA Restoration Center  
1201 NE Lloyd Blvd. #1100  
Portland, Oregon 97232

Re: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) comments on the Draft Portland Harbor Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA) Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) and Restoration Plan (EPA Project Number: 10-007-NOA).

Dear Ms. Grant:

This review was conducted in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Under our policies and procedures, we evaluate the environmental impact of the proposed action and the adequacy of the impact statement.

The PEIS evaluates the potential environmental impacts of two restoration planning alternatives and a no action alternative. The first action alternative proposes an integrated habitat restoration approach. The second action alternative is a species-specific restoration approach. The PEIS selects the integrated habitat restoration approach as the preferred alternative. The document also presents the Draft Portland Harbor NRDA Restoration Plan, which describes the integrated habitat approach and discusses restoration priorities, project selection, planning, implementation, and stewardship.

The EPA supports the identification of the integrated habitat restoration approach as the preferred alternative. We agree that this approach is likely to result in improvements to habitat, including water and sediment quality, over the long term. We are less supportive of the species-specific alternative, primarily because this alternative could employ artificial propagation. As noted on page 4-11 of the DEIS, artificial propagation is a controversial method for enhancing ESA-listed species. Concerns have been cited related to the genetic integrity, behavior and fitness of the progeny of artificially produced individuals, as well as their potential to interbreed with naturally produced individuals. Hatcheries also have potential implications for riverine habitat and water quality through their construction, operation, and waste water discharge. These factors, together with the fact that NOAA is at present reevaluating its hatchery strategy for the Columbia River through its Mitchell Act DEIS<sup>1</sup>, lead us to conclude that the integrated habitat restoration approach is environmentally preferable.

The EPA also agrees with the project selection criteria established in the Restoration Plan, as well as the types of desired restoration projects identified. We support and encourage close collaboration with the Trustee Council and the potentially responsible parties to incorporate beneficial habitat restoration into

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Salmon-Harvest-Hatcheries/Hatcheries/MA-EIS.cfm>

remedial project designs. We also support integrating restoration planning into the remedial process. By collaborating closely throughout this process we hope to ensure that projects within the study area effectively meet both remediation and restoration goals. We also hope to achieve cost savings and more expeditious completion of restoration.

Based on our review, we have assigned the PEIS a rating of LO (Lack of Objections). A copy of the EPA rating system is also enclosed. We appreciate this opportunity to comment at this stage of the analysis process. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at (206) 553-1601 or by electronic mail at [reichgott.christine@epa.gov](mailto:reichgott.christine@epa.gov), or you may contact Teresa Kubo of my staff at (503) 326-2859 or by electronic mail at [kubo.teresa@epa.gov](mailto:kubo.teresa@epa.gov).

Sincerely,



Christine B. Reichgott, Manager  
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit

Enclosures:

EPA Rating System for Draft Environmental Impact Statements

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Rating System for  
Draft Environmental Impact Statements  
Definitions and Follow-Up Action\***

**Environmental Impact of the Action**

**LO – Lack of Objections**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

**EC – Environmental Concerns**

EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce these impacts.

**EO – Environmental Objections**

EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no-action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

**EU – Environmentally Unsatisfactory**

EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potential unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

**Adequacy of the Impact Statement**

**Category 1 – Adequate**

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis of data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

**Category 2 – Insufficient Information**

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

**Category 3 – Inadequate**

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act and or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

\* From EPA Manual 1640 Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment. February, 1987.